Entertainment-Seeking Shopping Centre Patrons: The Missing Segments

Abstract

Entertainment is increasingly an integral part of the marketing strategy used by shopping centres to entice consumers. Further, entertainment can be a means of image differentiation for shopping centres, given that the image of a competitive retail institution is a critical determinant in consumer patronage decisions. However few studies have examined the contribution of entertainment to shopping centre image. Moreover, using entertainment as a means of identifying distinct market segments has not been explored. Hence, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, a model of attributes that represented the shopping centre image was identified. Three essential attributes that have been neglected in most shopping centre studies were revealed, namely entertainment, food and security. Second, six market segments of shopping centre patrons were identified and labelled the ‘serious’ shopper, the ‘entertainment’ shopper, the ‘demanding’ shopper, the ‘convenience’ shopper, the ‘apathetic’ shopper and the ‘service’ shopper. In particular, the ‘entertainment’ shopper and the ‘service’ shopper are identified as entertainment-seeking segments. Managerial implications of the findings and future research directions are addressed.

Key words: shopping centre, retail image, segmentation, entertainment, food

Introduction

The retail strategy of integrating *entertainment* into a shopping centre’s marketing mix has been gaining popularity over the past few years. Indeed, several major stores and shopping malls in the United States have been constructed with substantial square footages allocated to entertainment, for example, Nike Town, Mall of America and River Falls Mall (Haynes &

Talpade 1996). Shopping centre entertainment is a strategic marketing tool that can extend a shopping centre's trading areas, lengthen shopper stays, and increase revenues for tenants (Shim & Eastlick 1998). That is, entertainment (such as movie theatres, food courts and fashion shows) can enhance the ambience of a shopping centre conducive to an exciting and pleasant experience for shoppers.

One of the key decisions facing retail consumers is where to shop. However, the choice decision is becoming more complicated given the increasing number and variety of shopping alternatives, now spanning strip shopping centres, factory outlet centres, home shopping and the internet (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001; Kirkup & Rafiq, 1999; Nevin & Houston, 1980). Further, due to the intense competition, there is increasing pressure on shopping centres to clearly differentiate themselves more distinctively. Entertainment is a potential means of differentiation. Given that retail image reflects the total value of a shopping centre, a more favourable and unique retail image should create a sustainable competitive advantage that is not easily duplicated by competitors (Steenkamp & Wedel 1991). Indeed, previous studies have revealed a strong association between retail image and consumer shopping preferences (Baloglu & McClearly 1999; Ruiz 1999; Pessemier 1980), frequency of visit (Haynes & Talpade 1996; Howell & Rogers 1980), dollars spent (Donovan & Rossiter 1982; Howell & Rogers 1980), amount of purchase (Spies, Hesse & Loesch 1997; Howell & Rogers 1980), desire to stay (Wakefield & Baker 1998), and re-patronage intention (Wakefield & Baker 1998; Spies, Hesse & Loesch 1997). An understanding of consumer perceptions of shopping centre image, including entertainment, could assist the management in positioning and developing marketing strategy of the centre.

Individual consumers place different importance on the various image attributes of a shopping centre. Hence identification and understanding of shopper segments that emphasise particular common image attributes could assist shopping centres in the development of marketing strategy. That is, shopping centres could focus their marketing effort on those image attributes to which the target segment attaches high importance (Steenkamp & Wedel 1991). Previous studies of shopping centre image have primarily focused on four key attributes, namely merchandising, accessibility, service and atmospherics. However, those studies have not fully explored the contribution of entertainment attributes for the purpose of segmenting shopping centre patrons. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, this study aims to identify entertainment attributes that reflect the shopping centre image. Second, based on the entertainment attributes, the study aims to explore the existence of entertainment-seeking segments of shopping centre patrons.

The Retail Image Concept

There are numerous studies on retail image of *individual stores* (for example, supermarkets and specialty stores), but few studies have examined the image of *shopping centres* (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001; Birtwistle, Clarke & Freathy, 1998; Finn & Louviere, 1990; Ahn & Ghosh, 1989; Gautschi, 1981; Nevin & Houston, 1980; Houston & Nevin, 1980; Howell & Rogers, 1980; Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977). The retail image concept can be traced to the retail-store studies in 1950s. The pioneering retail store image study was conducted by Martineau (1958, p. 47), who defined the concept as ‘the way in which the retail store is interpreted in the shopper’s mind partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes’. This definition addresses the retail store image as a multi-dimensional concept, comprising distinct attributes.

Since the publication of Martineau's study (1958), most retail store image studies have adopted the multiple-attribute approach. Lindquist (1974-1975) conducted a meta-analysis of nineteen retail store image studies and synthesised their frameworks into nine image categories, namely merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institutional factors and post-transactional satisfaction.

Similar to the retail store literature, the multiple-attribute approach has been adopted by some shopping centre image studies (Dennis, Marsland & Cockett, 2001; Finn & Louviere, 1996; Ahn & Ghosh, 1989; Pessimier, 1980). Many studies of shopping centre image have primarily focused on four key attributes, namely merchandising, accessibility, services and atmospherics. This finding is consistent with the Lindquist's review (1974-1975), which also addressed merchandise, convenience and services as the dominant image attributes in the retail store literature. However, few studies have incorporated entertainment as an attribute of the shopping centre image. Beyond the pioneering shopping centre study that measured entertainment items including movie theatre and themed restaurants was conducted by Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977).

The entertainment mix of a shopping centre may comprise *specialty entertainment* (such as movie theatres), *special event entertainment* (such as fashion shows) and *food* (such as food courts and cafés). Besides an entertaining and pleasant ambience, a safe shopping environment is also central to consumer patronage. However, despite the significance of entertainment, food and security, little research has explicitly assessed their contribution to the shopping centre image. In the next section, the ’big four’ attributes (merchandising, accessibility, service and atmospherics) that dominate the shopping centre literature are discussed.

The ‘Big Four’ Attributes of Shopping Centre Image

A review of the retailing literature reveals four dominant attributes in shopping centre image studies: (1) merchandising; (2) accessibility, (3) service; and (4) atmospherics. An overview of shopping centre image studies is presented in Table 1.

Take in Table 1

Merchandising. *Merchandising* is the first of the ‘big four’ attributes of shopping centre image. Four merchandise-related items are frequently identified in the shopping centre literature, namely assortment, quality, pricing, and styling or fashion (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001, Wong, Lu & Yuan, 2001, Bell, 1999; Finn & Louviere, 1996; Finn & Louviere, 1990; Ahn & Ghosh, 1989; Weisbrod, Parcells & Kern, 1984; Gautschi, 1981, Nevin & Houston, 1980). Merchandising is an important image attribute because it represents the ‘core product’ of a shopping centre (Berman & Evans, 2001; Levy & Weitz, 1998; Smith & Burns, 1996). This is supported by Wakefield and Baker’s study (1998), which highlighted merchandising and tenant variety as stimulus that induce excitement in a shopping mall setting and thus influence the consumer’s image of the mall.

Accessibility. The second of the ‘big four’ attributes, *accessibility*, concerns the ease of getting in and out of a shopping centre (Levy & Weitz 1998). Accessibility can be further divided into macro-accessibility and micro-accessibility. *Macro-accessibility* concerns access road conditions to the centre and the proximity of the centre from the customer's place of work or residence. Unlike macro-accessibility, *micro-accessibility* refers to parking facilities within the centre and ease of navigation within the shopping centre (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001, Wong, Lu & Yuan, 2001; Bell, 1999; Finn & Louviere, 1996; Weisbrod, Parcells & Kern, 1984; Howell & Rogers, 1980; Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977). In order to increase patronage, a shopping centre should be easily accessible to minimise the searching time and psychological costs of consumers, including stress and frustration (Levy & Weitz, 1998).

Services. *Services* are the third of the 'big four' attributes of the shopping centre image. In the literature, shopping centre services are confined to behaviour of retail employees, such as courtesy, knowledge and friendliness. Thus these services can be classified as *personal service* (Lovelock, Patterson & Walker, 1998). However, besides personal service, shopping centres also provide *communal services* in terms of ambulance (such as escalators, lifts and sign boards) and amenities (such as restrooms) (Berman & Evans, 2001). Both personal and communal services are central to the shopping centre image because they represent the 'augmented product' that supports the merchandising (core product) and also add value to the total shopping experience of customers (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001; Wong, Lu & Yuan, 2001; Bell, 1999; Finn & Louviere, 1996; Finn & Louviere, 1990; Ahn & Ghosh, 1989; Nevin & Houston, 1980; Howell & Rogers, 1980; Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977).

Atmospherics. The fourth of the 'big four' attributes of shopping centre image concerns the *atmospherics* of a shopping centre. Five common atmospheric items measured are ambience, colour, décor, music and layout (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001; Wong, Lu & Yuan, 2001; Bell, 1999; Finn & Louviere, 1996; Nevin & Houston, 1980; Howell & Rogers, 1980; Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977). Atmospherics are critical because they act as environmental cues that consumers use to imply the quality of a shopping centre (Smith & Burns, 1996). Further, atmospherics have been reported to stimulate consumer excitement at a shopping mall (Wakefield and Baker, 1998).

Three Neglected Attributes of Shopping Centre Image

In the previous section the 'big four' attributes of the shopping centre image were discussed. However, in this study, a review of the literature together with preliminary investigations revealed three neglected attributes that are also deemed to be critical to shopping centre image, namely *entertainment*, *food* and *security*.

Entertainment. Very few shopping centre studies have identified entertainment as a distinctive attribute of shopping centre, rather as a *single item* inconsistently or variously associated to different attributes. Indeed, the first entertainment item, 'having a movie theatre', was identified in Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg's study (1977) and was associated with an attribute labelled *'presence of related services'*. Further, in Nevin and Houston's study (1980), the second entertainment item, 'special events or exhibits', loaded on a factor named *'assortment'*. The third entertainment item 'this mall has excellent entertainment alternatives' was found to be associated with the *'variety'* attribute in Wakefield and Baker's study (1998). In Frasquest, Gil and Molla's study (2001), two entertainment items, namely 'events and exhibitions' and 'attractive leisure offer', were associated with the *'atmosphere/leisure'* attribute. There are two possible explanations for entertainment being associated with different attributes. First, there could have been a temporal shift in the role of entertainment at a shopping centre, initially from being part of the augmented product (service) to becoming part of the core product (variety/assortment), and to being considered an environmental cue (atmosphere). Second, consumers are not homogeneous, and thus they may perceive a similar entertainment item differently in terms of their meanings and importance. In other words, different studies may reflect different consumer groups who impute different meaning to ‘entertainment’.

In contemporary shopping centre marketing, entertainment deserves to be demarcated as a distinct attribute that is operationalised by multiple items rather than a single item. Entertainment is pivotal to shopping centres because it induces an exciting or fun shopping experience, which in turn could entice consumer patronage (Haynes & Talpade 1996). Entertainment of shopping centres could be categorised into *special event entertainment* and *specialty entertainment*. The key distinction between these two types of entertainment is the length of duration or span of operation. (Haynes & Talpade 1996) That is, *special event entertainment* is offered on an occasional or seasonal basis for a short period of time, including fashion shows, bridal fairs, taking pictures with Santa Claus. Conversely, *specialty entertainment* is generally incorporated into a shopping centre’s property for a longer duration, including movie theatres and video arcades.

Food. By the 1970s, besides a proper mix of merchandising, shopping centre management realised that they needed to create an atmosphere of bustle and excitement to entice consumers (Kingston 1994). Since then, shopping centres have focused on their social role of being a communal meeting place. Shopping centre management has sought to alter consumers’ perceptions of shopping to be a community recreational activity, for seeing and being seen, for meeting and passively enjoying the atmosphere. Thus many shopping centres have incorporated food courts, cafes and restaurants on the centre property, either inside or on outparcels.

Like entertainment, few shopping centre studies have dealt with food as a *distinct* attribute of shopping centre image. A review of the literature revealed four food items that are associated with the retail mix of shopping centres. Similar to entertainment, the first item 'having restaurants' was identified in Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg's study (1977) and it loaded on a factor labelled *'presence of related services'*. 'Availability of lunch or refreshments' was the second food item identified and this was associated with a *'facilities'* attribute (Nevin & Houston, 1980). In Wee's study (1986), the third item 'has better eat and drink places' loaded under the *'assortment'* attribute. The fourth item 'the variety of food offered at the mall is excellent' was associated with the attribute of *'variety'* (Wakefield and Baker, 1998).

Hence, like entertainment, the stimulation of food to shopping centre patrons has not been overtly captured in the previous studies. Yet, food and entertainment are pivotal to shoppers because they: (1) create an entertaining ambience within a shopping centre conducive to a pleasant or exciting shopping experience; and (2) provide a needed break from hours of shopping and/or as a conclusion to an extended shopping excursion (Wakefield & Baker, 1998; Haynes & Talpade, 1996).

Security. Unfortunately, besides attracting consumers, shopping centres also appeal to the criminals. In recent times, shopping centres are being targeted as a scene for gang violence, abductions, carjackings, armed robberies, sexual assaults, homicide and crimes by and against young children (Lee, Hollinger & Dabney, 1999). Several features of shopping centres make them suitable targets for criminal activities. For example, vast parking lots and unsupervised enclosed garages offer out of the way places for offenders to perpetrate attacks. Consumers entering shopping centres often carry large amount of cash, credit cards and cheques, and leave carrying valuable merchandise (Lee, Hollinger & Dabney, 1999). The consumer behaviour literature has revealed that many consumers are risk-averse and thus they may be reluctant to visit a shopping centre that is perceived to be dangerous (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997; Hawkins, Neal & Quester, 1994). Despite its significance, limited studies have examined the contribution of security to shopping centre image. Only three security items were found in a review of the literature and, like entertainment, those items were variously associated with different attributes. The first security item, 'security', was measured by Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977) and it was loaded on a factor labelled *'quality of the centre'*. The second item 'safe place to be' was associated with the *'facilities'* attribute (Wee 1986). 'Personal security' was the third security item and was associated wih *'atmosphere/leisure'* attribute (Frasquet, Gil & Molla, 2001).

Market Segmentation by Shopping Centre Image

Few academic studies explore the contribution of image attributes to the *segmentation* of shopping centre patrons. In the shopping centre image literature, two segmentation studies based on image attributes were identified, as shown in table 1 (Dennis, Marsland & Cockett, 2001; Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg, 1977). The pioneering but 'quasi-segmentation' study conducted by Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977) identified two shopper segments, namely the '*economic'* shopper and the '*recreational'* shopper. The two shopper types were identified through canonical analysis of four image attributes (quality of merchandise, variety of merchandise, store décor, distance travelled) and psycho-demographics. The economic shopper emphasised a convenient location, whereas the recreational shopper placed more importance on attractive décor and creative merchandising (Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg, 1977).

Unlike Bellenger, Robertson and Greenberg (1977), Dennis, Marsland & Cockett (2001) cluster analysed the 'big four' image attributes to identify two shopper segments of shopping centres. These two segments were labelled the *'shops'* shopper (those for whom store variety, store quality, covered shopping and public transport access are of higher importance), and the *'service'* shopper (those for whom parking, access by car, good amenity, staff helpfulness and value for money are of higher importance).

Segmentation of shopping centre patrons by image attributes is insightful because individual shoppers are not homogenous in terms of the benefits they seek from a shopping centre. That is, different individual shoppers may place different importance on the various image attributes of the centre (Steenkamp & Wedel 1991). However, shopping centre segmentation should not be confined to the 'big four' attributes (merchandising, service, accessibility and atmospherics), as three additional attributes (entertainment, food and security) could enrich the characteristics of shopper segments.

Research Design

In this study, two types of shopping centres, namely regional and sub-regional were studied due to their important contribution to the retail sales and employment of Australia. A *regional shopping centre* is defined by the Property Council of Australia (1999) as being built around one full-line department store, a full-line discount department store, one or more supermarkets and around 100 specialty stores. It has a broad range of retail outlets and the whole complex generally has a total lettable floor space of between 30 000 and 50 000 square metres. Unlike the regional centre, a *sub-regional shopping centre* is a medium-sized shopping centre *without* a full-line department store but is dominated by at least a full-line discount department store or a major supermarket. It has approximately 10 000 to 30 000 square metres of floor space (Property Council of Australia 1999). However, nowadays the range of retail outlets and the depth of merchandises offered by sub-regional centres are found to be almost as exhaustive as regional centres. In particular, like regional centres, some sub-regional centres also have built-in specialty entertainment (for example, cinemas and video arcades), provide occasional entertainments (for example, fashion shows), and incorporate food courts and cafés on their centre properties (Property Council of Australia 1999). Therefore, regional centres and sub-regional centres can sometimes share broadly similar image dimensions.

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved conducting qualitative research, designing a research instrument and pre-testing the research instrument. The second phase involved gathering data in a regional city in Queensland, Australia. In the *first-phase*, focus groups were conducted to explore items that shoppers perceived to be important for shopping centre image. The focus group discussions revealed that participants consistently mentioned their purposes to shopping centres included movies, game zones, dining and meeting friends or family. Some participants also emphasised the entertaining experiences at the centres such as lucky draws and fashion shows.

From the focus groups together with the literature, a pool of forty-eight items was generated to operationalise the shopping centre image. The face validity of these items was evaluated through conducting a screening exercise (Litwin 1995; Sekaran 1992). The aim of this exercise was to determine the extent to which each item reflected one of the seven image dimensions discussed above (merchandising, accessibility, services, atmospherics, entertainment, food and security). The screening exercise involved twenty judges, including academic and administration staff within the marketing department of a university. The screening exercise allowed the large number of items to be reduced to a more manageable and robust number (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988; Churchill 1979). Thirty-nine items were retained and were incorporated into a survey instrument, as outlined in the table 2.

Consistent with the literature, the screening exercise revealed that the entertainment dimension should be split into two separate attributes, namely specialty entertainment and special event entertainment. Moreover, the accessibility dimension were split into two separate attributes, namely macro-accessibility and micro-accessibility, whereas the atmospheric dimension were split into three separate attributes, namely amenities, ambulance and atmospherics. Hence, in this study, a total of eleven attributes were proposed to conceptualise the shopping centre image, namely merchandising, macro-accessibility, micro-accessibility, personal services, amenities, ambulance, atmospherics, specialty entertainment, special event entertainment, food, and security, as outlined in table 2.

Take in Table 2

In the survey instrument, the thirty-nine items were measured on a five-point Likert-type importance scale, and questions about patronage motives and demographics were also included. The survey instrument was then pre-tested with academic and administrative staff, as well as, marketing students. The main purpose of the pre-testing was to identify potential errors in terms of the wording, phrasing, and sequencing of questions. Only grammatical errors were identified and they were subsequently corrected. Hence, all thirty-nine items were retained in the survey instrument for the second phase. Given that this study measured regional centres and sub-regional centres, two versions of the survey instrument with similar content were used. Using two versions of the survey instrument reduced the time required from respondents, and thus encouraged a greater response rate (Remenyi, Williams, Money & Swartz 1998).

For the *second phase*, a mail survey was administered to 1920 households within the regional city. Households were randomly selected using an area sampling technique, and the main shopper in the household was requested to respond. Five hundreds and three usable questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 26.2 percent. To test for non-response bias, Chi-square testing was conducted and revealed no significant differences between early and late responses. Hence, a follow-up of non-respondents was not deemed necessary.

Data Analysis

In line with the research objectives, the data analysis in this study involved two stages, namely confirmatory factor analysis and cluster analysis. First, confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS software was used to evaluate the dimensionality of shopping centre image and thereby assess the validity of the eleven image attributes. The second stage of analysis involved k-means clustering (a non-hierarchical clustering) of shopping centre respondents to explore whether distinctive groupings of shoppers could be discerned. The cluster analysis was based on the importance of the eleven image attributes. K-means clustering has been found to be both exceptionally robust and unaffected by data idiosyncrasies (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black 1992; Punj & Stewart 1983).

Analysis of Results

As addressed in the previous section, the objectives of this study are: (1) to identify entertainment attributes conceptualising the shopping centre image; and (2) to explore distinct shopper segments of regional centres and sub-regional centres. The results of each objective will be discussed in turn.

Dimensionality of Shopping Centre Image

Previous studies have used exploratory factor analysis to extract image structure (Frasquet, Gil & Molla 2001; Wong, Lu & Yuan 2001). Given that some image attributes such as atmospherics are well known and acceptable, *confirmatory factor analysis* (CFA) is preferred over *exploratory factor analysis*, provided there are more than four items when using AMOS. As outlined in table 2, five out of the total of eleven image attributes comprised less than four items and thus were inapplicable for CFA. The five attributes are merchandising, macro-accessibility, specialty entertainment, special event entertainment and food. The other six attributes that were subjected to CFA included micro-accessibility, personal service, amenities, ambulance, atmospherics and security.

Six statistical tests were used to analyse the CFA findings, namely Chi-square, probability value (p-value), goodness of fit index (AGI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), Cmin ratio, and root means square error of approximation (RMSEA). These statistical tests were used to evaluate the: (a) overall reliability of the data as measured by Chi-square and p-value; (b) level of fit between the data and the model by AGI and AGFI; and (c) level of misfit between the data and the model by Cmin ratio and RMSEA.

(a) Overall the test statistics provided support for the six image attributes: micro-accessibility (χ^2 = 8.29, p >0.05); personal service (χ^2 = 13.02, p >0.05; amenities (χ^2 = 2.29, p >0.05); ambulance (χ^2 = 3.00, p >0.05); atmospherics (χ^2 = 6.08, p >0.05); and security (χ^2 = 16.00, p >0.05), as presented in table 3. The chi-square statistics indicated whether moment matrices reproduced from the estimated matrices differed significantly from the observed sample moment matrices. The insignificance of the chi-square suggests that the model is an adequate representation of the data.

Take in Table 3

(b) Conventional goodness of fit measures of GFI and AGFI were used to measure the extent to which the data explain the observations, akin to a coefficient of determination. The GFI and AGFI of the six image attributes are ideally above 0.90. The actual GFI ranged between 0.98 and 0.99 and the AGFI ranged 0.95 and 0.98. This indicates a very satisfactory fit of the six image attributes.

(c) Two measures of *misfit* were also reported, with the aim for the statistics to be as low as possible. The first statistic of misfit is the Cmin ratio (chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom) and should be as low as possible and ideally below 3. Micro-accessibility, personal service, amenities, atmospherics and security had a satisfactory fit with their Cmin ratios well under 3, whereas ambulance was on acceptable fit given the Cmin ratio approximately equals 3. The second measure of misfit was the RMSEA, where Browne (1990) suggested that values of 0.05 or less reflect *close* fit and values of 0.08 or less reflect a *reasonable* fit of a model. Micro-accessibility, personal service and security were a good fit with the RMSEA less than 0.05, whereas the RMSEA of amenities, ambulance and atmospherics ranged between 0.05 and 0.07, which reflected a reasonable fit.

Take in Figure 1

For the interest of readers, the importance ratings of the eleven image attributes between the regional and sub-regional centres is presented in figure 1. With respect to *entertainment*, the t-test of difference revealed that *specialty entertainment* and *food* appeared to be more important for regional centres than for sub-regional centres (Norusis 1993). However, no difference was found for special event entertainment between those two centres. These results are consistent with the focus groups findings, where participants perceived the regional centre as a place of experience, socialisation or leisure, whereas the sub-regional centre was considered as a convenient place for groceries or necessities. This is one of the first studies to contrast consumer perceptions of regional centres and sub-regional centres. However, like regional centres, nowadays sub-regional centres also integrate cinemas and video arcades, as well as food courts and cafés into their properties (Property Council of Australia 1999).

Hence, further research is required to examine the notion of entertainment between regional centres and sub-regional centres.

Segmentation of the shopping centre sample

The second stage of data analysis involved k-means clustering of shopping centre respondents to explore whether distinctive groupings of shoppers could be discerned. Eleven image attributes, (merchandising, macro-accessibility, micro-accessibility, personal service, amenities, ambulance, atmospherics, specialty entertainment, special event entertainment, food and security), were used as a basis for clustering. Cluster analysis was conducted separately for regional centres and sub-regional centres. In order to determine the optimal number of clusters to be formed, six-cluster, seven-cluster and eight-cluster solutions were performed and examined. For both categories of shopping centres, the six-cluster solution was chosen as it produced the most meaningful and contrasting segments of shoppers, whereas the seven-cluster and eight-cluster solution did not contribute any additional meaningful shopper segments. Further, the *face validity* of the six-cluster solution is supported by the consistency of demographics in each segment (Litwin 1995). For example, one segment termed the 'entertainment' shopper, which emphasised cinema (specialty entertainment) and food court (food), was dominated by teenage single males with low annual income. This young segment appeared to be 'fearless' due to their lower concern for security.

For both regional and sub-regional centres, six shopper segments varied in the importance they placed on the eleven image attributes. The size of these segments also differs between regional and sub-regional centres. The image characteristics and size of the six segments are summarised in table 4, whereas the demographic characteristics that dominate each segment are presented in table 5. These six shopping centre segments were labelled the *'serious' shopper*, the *'entertainment' shopper*, the *'demanding' shopper*, the *'convenience' shopper*, the *'apathetic' shopper'* and the *'service shopper'*. Each of these clusters is discussed in turn.

Take in Table 4

Take in Table 5

Serious shopper. The 'serious' shopper (cluster 1) comprised 13 percent of the shopping centre respondents. This cluster was distinguished by high importance on almost all image attributes, with the exception of specialty and special event entertainment. This cluster could be characterised as a segment that perceive shopping as an important responsibility (for example, shopping for gifts), and thus is more concerned with the utilitarian attributes that facilitate the shopping responsibility. The 'serious' shopper also attained a high rating on the food attribute. However, this segment is more likely to use the food court for a break during or after long shopping excursions, rather than as a social meeting venue (Wakefield & Baker, 1998). The majority of serious shoppers were older female respondents, aged 55 and above, widowed with an average household income. As indicated by their low ratings on entertainment attributes, the serious shopper is not concerned with social activities at a shopping centre, that is to say, meeting people and shopping for entertainment or a meal. This shopper holds a moderate attitude toward browsing at a shopping centre.

Entertainment shopper. The entertainment shopper (cluster 2) represented the second largest cluster with 22 percent of the shopping centre respondents. In contrast to the serious shopper, the entertainment shopper placed higher importance on atmospherics and entertainment attributes and less importance on security. All entertainment attributes, including specialty entertainment, special event entertainment and food, as well as atmospherics were important to this segment. Entertainment shoppers perceive shopping as a leisure activity, including browsing, entertainment, meeting people and dining out. Further, this segment of shoppers perceives shopping centres as an entertaining or exciting place to ‘hang out’, either at the movie theatre or the video arcade. Unlike the serious shoppers, entertainment shoppers perceive the food court as social meeting venue rather than as a needed break from shopping. In this study, entertainment shoppers were mainly teenage single males with a low annual income.

Demanding shopper. The third cluster, the demanding shopper, was the largest segment comprising 25 percent of the shopping centre respondents. Similar to the serious shopper, the demanding shopper attained the highest ratings of all clusters on almost all image attributes, with the exception of macro-accessibility. This shopper had exceptionally high expectations of shopping centre image, and expect high levels on every image attribute. The majority of demanding shoppers were middle-aged and married, with a low household income. Demanding shoppers appear to be highly involved shoppers with multiple patronage motives, including browsing, meeting people, entertainment, and dining out.

Convenience shopper. The convenience shopper (cluster 4) comprised 17 percent of the shopping centre respondents. This cluster of shopper indicated higher importance on both micro- and macro-accessibility and lesser importance on entertainment attributes. In terms of micro-accessibility, convenience shoppers emphasised the ease of getting in and out of a shopping centre. Further, given their highest rating on macro-accessibility, this segment appears to patronise a shopping centre that is close to their home. Unlike the entertainment shopper, the convenience shopper has less concern about entertainment (food, specialty entertainment and special event entertainment). This segment appears to be more similar to the serious shopper, whose main patronage motive is to fulfil the shopping responsibility (for example, shopping for household items) rather than to seek leisure. The convenience segment is time scarce due to work and/or family commitment. Most of convenience shoppers were middle-aged females earning above average income, and many reported their marital status as 'separated'.

Apathetic shopper. In this study, the apathetic shopper is the smallest segment with 7 percent of the shopping centre respondents. In contrast to demanding shoppers, apathetic shoppers reported the lowest ratings of all clusters on almost all image attributes. This segment appears to visit a shopping centre largely out of necessity, with no intrinsic interest in shopping activity and perceiving shopping as 'a burden or chore'. Hence, apathetic shoppers rarely browse, meet people, dine out or seek entertainment at the shopping centre. The majority of apathetic shoppers were represented by older married males, aged 45 and above, with a high annual income.

Service shopper. The sixth and final cluster, the service shopper, represented 16 percent of the shopping centre respondents. Service shoppers reported higher importance for personal service and ambulance service (such as, escalators and lifts) within a shopping centre. Unlike the entertainment shopper, this segment perceived both specialty and special event entertainment to be an essential part of the *service* rather than *entertainment* of a shopping centre. That is, specialty and special event entertainment are perceived as a form of social interaction, with other shoppers and/or retail employees. The majority of service shoppers are young adults, often married and with an average annual income. Service shoppers enjoy browsing, meeting people, shopping for meals and entertainment a shopping centre.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, this study has identified three entertainment attributes that are essential to the shopping centre image, namely *specialty entertainment*, *special event entertainment*, and *food*. Second, this study revealed six distinct market segments of shopping centre patrons, who placed varying levels of importance on entertainment. These six shopper segments were: (1) the *'serious' shopper* (those whom almost all image attributes except entertainment were of high importance); (2), the *'entertainment' shopper* (those to whom entertainment attributes and atmospherics were of higher importance); (3), the *'demanding' shopper* (those to whom all image attributes including entertainment were of high importance); (4) the *'convenience' shopper* (those who placed higher importance on macro- and micro-accessibility and lesser importance on entertainment); (5) the *'apathetic' shopper* (those to whom nearly all image attributes were of low importance); and (6) the *'service' shopper* (those who placed greater importance on personal service, ambulance and entertainment).

Two of the six shopper segments reflect the findings of an outshopping study by Jarratt (1996), who identified six types of outshoppers on the basis of three image attributes (offer, service and environment). Jarratt's (1996) segments were labelled the *'have to'* shopper, the *'moderate'* shopper, the *'service'* shopper, the *'experiential'* shopper, the *'practical'* shopper, and the *'product'* shopper. The 'demanding' shopper and 'apathetic' shopper of this study appear to be identical to Jarratt's (1996) 'experiential' shopper' and 'have to' shopper respectively. On the other hand, while another two shopper segments of this study, 'serious' shopper and 'service' shoppers, are broadly consistent with Jarratt's (1996) findings, they are distinguished by the entertainment attributes. In particular, the 'serious' shopper is analogous with Jarratt's (1996) 'practical' shopper, who is more concerned with the merchandise and service but less concerned with the atmospheric. However, this study has revealed that food is also essential for serious shoppers as a needed break during or after shopping. Congruent with Jarratt's (1996) findings, service shoppers place greater importance on services than other attributes, but the service shoppers in this study also emphasised entertainment as part of their social interactions. Beyond these similarities and modifications, this study has also identified two new shopper segments, namely the 'entertainment' shopper and the 'convenience' shopper.

Contributions and Managerial Implications

This study provides an extension to the academic literature on shopping centre marketing. That is, this study identifies three entertainment attributes that have been neglected from the shopping centre literature, namely *specialty entertainment*, *special event entertainment* and *food*. This study also has important implications for the management of shopping centres. First, this study highlights the potential significance of entertainment in differentiating the shopping centre image. Given increasing competition in the shopping centre industry, a shopping centre image should no longer be confined to attributes such as merchandises, accessibility, services and atmospherics. Indeed, the integration of entertainment into a shopping centre's marketing mix could serve as a means of image differentiation. In particular, the regional centre in this study is perceived as a place for experience, socialisation and leisure, whereas the sub-regional centre was considered as a convenient place for groceries or necessities. Typically, the regional centre has more entertainment attributes, including cinemas and fashion shows.

Second, this study has indicated the insightfulness of entertainment as a means of developing distinct shopper segments. Indeed, two 'pro-entertainment' and two 'anti-entertainment' segments were identified in this study. The pro-entertainment segments refer to those shoppers that seek stimulation and socialisation through entertainment attributes, and these segments comprised the *'entertainment'* shopper and the *'service'* shopper. Hence, shopping centre management will need to understand the key issues driving shopping activity of these pro-entertainment segments, and thus determine the suitability of promotional campaigns. For example, 'entertainment' shoppers, who were mainly teenagers, sought stimulation through entertainment. The management will need to provide these shoppers with innovative video arcades, variety of food outlets, and wide selections of movies. On the other hand, 'service' shoppers are more motivated by socialisation, and thus the management should provide these shoppers with an interactive shopping environment through mini-concerts and well-trained staff providing in-store service.

In contrast to pro-entertainment segments, the anti-entertainment segments refer to shoppers that have little concern or interest in entertainment. In this study, the two anti-entertainment segments comprised the '*serious' shopper* and the '*convenience' shopper*. Hence, in serving these segments, management should enhance the ease of navigation at the shopping centre through informative signage, escalators or lifts, easy access to car parks, and a good range of merchandise under one roof. Further, given ‘serious’ shoppers importantly perceived the food attribute as a necessity, management should provide these shoppers with a good choice of food outlets that are easily and quickly accessible.

In addition to pro- and anti-entertainment segments, there are two extreme shopper segments, the demanding shopper and the apathetic shopper, that present challenges to shopping centre management. *Demanding shoppers* have exceptionally high expectations on every image attribute and their expectations could be beyond the cost effectiveness or feasibility of the centre. Conversely, *apathetic shoppers* are those who dislike or even hate shopping. Hence, any promotional effort targeted on this apathetic segment might not be worth the investment.

Limitations and Future Research

Every effort was made to ensure that the conceptual and methodological aspects of this study were precise as possible. However, two constraints of the research are acknowledged. First, the findings are confined to regional and sub-regional shopping centres. These two types of shopping centres were studied because of their substantial contribution to the retail sales and economy of Australia (Property Council of Australia 1999). Second, the study was conducted in a major regional city in Queensland, Australia. Thus, the findings might not be representative of Australians in general. Hence, research in other regions, major cities and other countries is required to examine the validity, reliability and generalisability of the identified image attributes and shopper taxonomy.

Overall this study provided evidence of the contribution of entertainment in marketing shopping centres. Two segments, namely entertainment and service shoppers, were identified as ‘entertainment seeking’. However, shopping centre management should appreciate that entertainment represents slightly different meanings to different segments. This study provides a framework for shopping centre management who seek to use ‘entertainment’ as a means of gaining a competitive advantage or for differentiation.

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Table 1: An Overview of Image Attributes in Shopping Centre Studies

Author(s) & year	Image items																**Segmentation of respondents**	**Basis of segment formation**
	Size of shopping areas (ie no. of stores)	Anchors (department, discount, etc)	Store variety	Merchandise assortment	Merchandise/store quality	Merchandise/store pricing	Merchandise styling/fashion	Locational convenience	Ease of access/navigation	Parking	Transportation modes & cost	Services	Atmospherics (eg décor, ambience, ect)	Food	Entertainment	Safety		
1. Dennis, Marsland & Cockett (2001)			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					Yes	Image attributes
2. Frasquet, Gil & Molla (2001)			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	Yes	Demographics
3. Wong, Lu & Yuan (2001)				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				No	No
4. Bell (1999)					✓	✓		✓				✓	✓				No	No
5. Wakefield & Baker (1998)			✓						✓				✓	✓	✓		No	No
6. Finn & Louviere (1996)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				No	No
7. Finn & Louviere (1990)				✓	✓	✓	✓					✓					Yes	Consideration sets[1]
8. Ahn & Ghosh (1989)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓					No	No
9. Wee (1986)		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	No	No
10. Weisbrod, Parcells & Kern (1984)	✓		✓	✓							✓						No	No
11. Gautschi (1981)				✓		✓			✓		✓						No	No

12. Nevin & Houston (1980)				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		No	No
13. Howell & Rogers (1980)					✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				No	No
14. Bellenger, Robertson & Greenberg (1977)		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quasi[2]	Image attributes Psycho-demographics
Total of each attribute	3	3	4	8	9	9	4	7	5	4	4	10	7	4	4	2		
Image attributes	*Merchandising*							*Accessibility*				*Personal service*	*Atmospherics*	*Food*	*Entertainment*	*Security*		
Total attributes in each dimension	40							20				10	7	4	4	2		

[1]consideration sets = consumer evoked set of shopping centres
[2]consumer segments were implied from canonical analysis of retail image attributes and psycho-demographics

(Source: developed from literature review)

Table 2: Grouping of attributes representing shopping centre image

Items	Grouping
1. a good choice of brands 2. stores stock my preferred brands 3. good range of products	Merchandising
4. close to home 5. good condition of access roads	Macro-accessibility
6. adequate parking space 7. easily find the entrances and exits to the centre 8. easy to get around within the centre 9. trading hours are appropriate for me	Micro-accessibility
10. assistance at information desk 11. courtesy at information desk 12. prompt service at information desk 13. knowledge of employees at information desk 14. neat uniform of employees at information desk 15. helpfulness of centre management 16. positive attitude of centre management	Personal service
17. clean restrooms 18. easy to find the restrooms 19. restrooms are conveniently located 20. overall cleanliness of the centre	Amenities
21. adequate escalators 22. adequate lifts 23. directory sign boards 24. centre brochures	Ambulance
25. pleasant background music 26. fashionable colour scheme 27. modern décor 28. well-lit 29. air-conditioned	Atmospherics
30. specific venues for entertainment (ie cinemas & game zones)	Specialty entertainment
31. occasional entertainment (ie fashion shows and lucky draws)	Special event entertainment
32. food court	Food
33. safety of my vehicle in car park 34. personal safety in car park 35. personal safety within the centre 36. safety of escalators 37. safety of lifts 38. security guards on duty 39. safety in restrooms	Security

(Source: developed based on literature review and preliminary investigations)

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Six Image Attributes

Attributes	**Items**	χ^2	p-value	GFI	AGFI	CMIN/df	RMSEA
Micro-accessibility	Adequate parking space Easily find the entrances and exits to the centre Easy to get around within the centre Trading hours are appropriate for me	8.29	0.082	0.99	0.98	2.07	0.046
Personal service	Assistance at information desk Courtesy at information desk Prompt service at information desk Knowledge of employees at information desk Neat uniform of employees at information desk Helpfulness of centre management Positive attitude of centre management	17.35	0.098	0.98	0.95	1.58	0.048
Amenities	Clean restrooms Easy to find the restrooms Restrooms are conveniently located Overall cleanliness of the centre	2.29	0.130	0.99	0.98	2.29	0.051
Ambulance	Adequate escalators Adequate lifts Directory sign boards Centre brochures	3.00	0.078	0.99	0.97	3.12	0.065
Atmospherics	Pleasant background music Fashionable colour scheme Modern décor Well-lit Air-conditioned	0.28	0.594	0.99	0.96	0.28	0.064
Security	Safety of my vehicle in car park Personal safety in car park Personal safety within the centre Safety of escalators Safety of lifts Security guards on duty Safety in restrooms	14.72	0.196	0.98	0.96	1.34	0.037

Table 4: Consumer Image Clusters of Shopping Centre

	Means scores					
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6
Image components/attributes	**Serious**	**Entertainment**	**Demanding**	**Convenience**	**Apathetic**	**Service**
1) Merchandise	3.57	3.05	3.64	3.39	2.94	3.19
2) Macro-accessibility	2.74	2.75	2.83	2.86	1.58	.86
3) Micro-accessibility	3.33	2.92	3.55	3.30	2.53	3.19
4) Personal service	3.40	2.71	3.48	3.11	1.70	3.24
5) Amenities	3.80	3.11	3.88	3.52	2.11	3.50
6) Ambulance	2.90	2.27	3.22	2.52	1.52	2.70
7) Atmospherics	2.35	2.27	3.03	2.16	1.47	2.24
8) Security	3.61	2.90	3.74	3.35	2.25	3.35
9) Specialty entertainment	.78	2.31	3.00	1.04	1.08	2.13
10) Special event entertainment	.79	1.77	2.68	.81	.40	1.90
11) Food	3.04	2.56	3.24	.80	.92	2.12

	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		Cluster 5		Cluster 6		**Total membership**	
Types of shopping centres	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*	*R*	*S*
% of membership by shopping centres	5.2	7.6	10.7	11.5	13.5	11.9	6.2	10.5	4.2	3.0	10.3	5.4	50.1	49.9

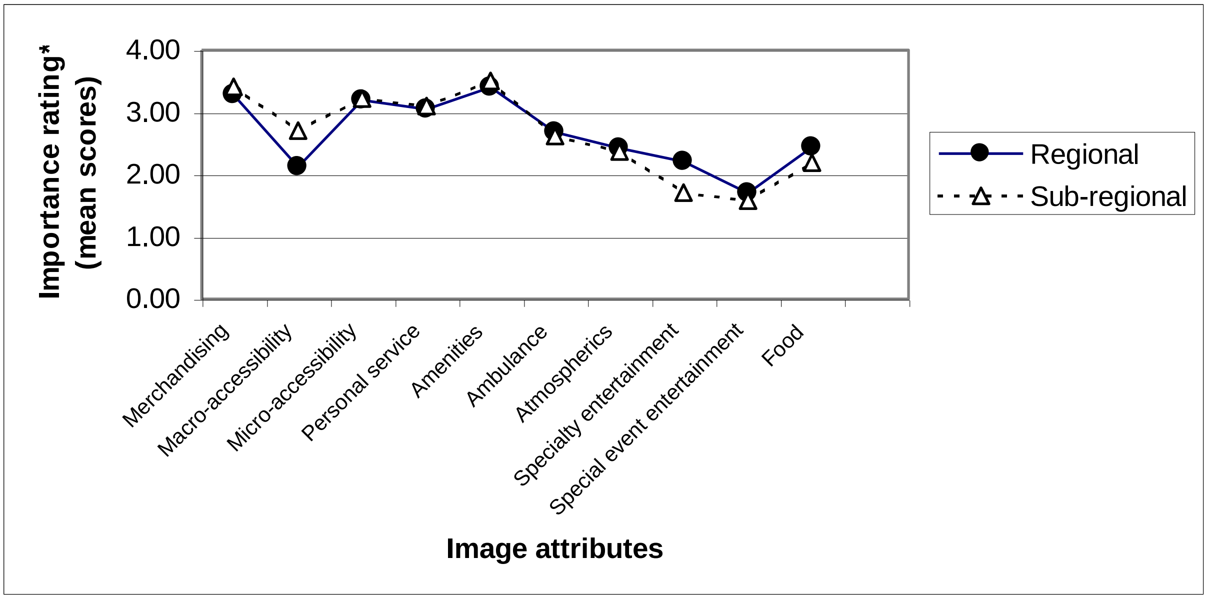
R = regional centre *S* = sub-regional centre

Table 5: Dominant Demographic Characteristics of Shopping Centre Segments

Dominant Demographics	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6
	Serious	**Entertainment**	**Demanding**	**Convenience**	**Apathetic**	**Service**
Gender*	Female	Male	Both	Female	Male	Both
Age*	Older	Young	Middle-aged	Middle-aged	Older	Young
Marital status*	Widowed	Single	Married	Separated	Married	Married
Total annual household income*	Average	Low	Low	Above average	High	Average
Shopping occasion						
Browsing*	Moderate	Yes	Yes	No	Moderate	Yes
Meeting friends/family*	No	Moderate	Yes	No	No	Yes
Shopping for a meal*	No	Moderate	Yes	No	No	Yes
Shopping for entertainment*	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

*Significant at $p < .05$

Figure 1: Image Attributes for Regional and Sub-regional Centres



*0 = not all important; 1 = not so important; 2 = neutral; 3 = fairly important; 4 = very important